UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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NEW OCEANOGRAPHY LABORATORY IN FLORIDA TO BOOST UNITED STATES OCEAN SCIENCES EFFORT

The United States oceanographic program received a major boost today with announcement by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Frank P. Briggs of selection of Miami, Florida for a new tropical oceanography-fisheries research center.

The new ocean sciences laboratory will be operated by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

Assistant Secretary Briggs said that selection of the laboratory locale followed many months' study by the Department in order to place it centrally to universities and non-Government research and teaching centers in the marine sciences.

"Although there were several other sites in the final considerations, the Miami area was selected as the location best suited to current and future oceanographic needs," Mr. Briggs said. "The nearness to the Institute of Marine Science at the University of Miami and unique research facilities at the Miami Seaquarium will give this oceanography-fisheries center a strong start toward making a major contribution to the National oceanographic program," he said.

The new center will be specially geared to research in tuna and other tropical fisheries and can be expected to make a major contribution to a better understanding of the untapped fishery resources of the tropical Atlantic, Mr. Briggs said.

The Department explained that the tropical Atlantic research program of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries has been underway about two years. Presently based at temporary headquarters in Washington, D. C., this staff is the focal center for the International Cooperative Investigations of the Tropical Atlantic in which about a dozen European, African, and North and South American countries, including the U. S. S. R., are studying this little known part of the ocean. Two joint cruises were recently completed in which 14 research vessels from seven countries participated.

The Department said that the specific site in Miami for the new laboratory has not yet been selected. Funds for planning and designing the laboratory have been appropriated by Congress. Construction should start late in 1964 if funds are available.

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